



# YOUR PERSONALIZED GARDEN PLANTING DATES

by Kathi Rodgers



## Spring planting

Timing is key to a vegetable garden that thrives and produces a bountiful harvest!



Have you ever planted your cabbage late? Before the heads were ready to harvest, your summer temperatures soared, your cabbage bolted and went to seed, and you had **no harvest at all**.



Or you transplanted your tomato seedlings into the garden on a warm and sunny spring day, only to have them **killed by frost** two nights later?

After reading this seed-starting guide and figuring out **your own personalized seed-starting dates**, you'll be able to start your seeds on time, transplant seedlings when appropriate for your climate, and grow a thriving garden!

You're about to learn:

- how to find your average last frost date
- whether to start your seeds indoors or plant them in your garden
- when to plant your vegetable seeds

And you'll **never have to figure this out again** - you can use this guide every year from now on!

I'm Kathi Rodgers, avid gardener and the writer behind Oak Hill Homestead.

I married a career military man, who took me around the world and back and forth across the United States a couple of times. After our 30th move I stopped counting.

But whenever I could, wherever I could, I planted a garden of some sort, even if it was just a tomato plant in a pot.

That meant figuring out my ideal spring planting dates all over again every time we moved to a different climate.

Now that we have settled down in Oklahoma, I've figured out my ideal planting dates and have tweaked them for my very own backyard garden. What's more, I use my planting date guide every year. I'll never have to figure out those planting dates again!

I'm going to help you figure out YOUR ideal planting dates too!



*Let's get started!*

## Timing is the key to a great garden

Knowing your average last spring frost date is the starting point. This date will determine when you should:

- Start seeds indoors
- Plant them directly in your garden
- Transplant those indoor seedlings out in the garden

You need to time your garden around that last spring frost.

## Frost dates are a guideline

It's important to know that your average last frost date is just that: an ***average of many years' worth of data***. In other words, it's a best guess.

There is no guarantee that you won't have a frost or even a killing freeze after your average last frost date - it's simply a guideline for planting.

There's actually a 30% chance that you ***will*** have a frost after your average last frost date in the spring. Some years spring comes early, and some years it comes late.

This is most important when you're planting frost tender plants such as tomatoes and peppers.

Some plants can tolerate a light frost (typically from 30° to 32°F), and some other plants can survive if they are protected in some way, such as by covering with frost cloth.



Frost tender plants, such as tomatoes and peppers, may not survive even with protection.

It's important to plant your seeds at the right time so they'll have the greatest chance of survival.



Let's find *your* personalized planting dates

#### **STEP ONE:**

Use this website to find your average frost dates using your zip code. So easy!

→ <https://davesgarden.com/guides/freeze-frost-dates/> ←

Just enter your zip code and click on the orange box marked “GO” to find your average last frost date.

Your results will look similar to this. (Note: I’m using my own dates as examples.)

Each winter, on average, your risk of frost is from October 28 **through April 3**. Almost certainly, however, you will receive frost from November 9 through March 22. You are almost guaranteed that you will not get frost from **April 16** through October 14. Your frost-free growing season is around 208 days.

On the first line, you’ll find your first fall frost and your last spring frost dates. As you can see, my last frost is April 3.

This also tells me that my FIRST average frost date in the fall is October 28th, but for now, we’re interested in the spring date..

Notice the sentence that says “You are almost guaranteed that you will not get frost.” **Almost**. This date is helpful when you’re ready to transplant plant frost-tender, heat-loving plants like tomatoes and peppers into the garden.

For me this date is April 16th. Twice in the past five years we’ve had a late frost and even a hard freeze on April 17th. Remember that word “almost”!

Check the 10-day forecast before you plant those frost-tender plants!

## STEP TWO:

Now that you know your average last frost date, write the date on the worksheet in this guide called My Personalized Seed Planting Dates on the line “My average last frost date is \_\_\_\_\_”

My Personalized Seed Planting Dates

Spring Garden

My average last frost date is:

Remember, your “average last frost date” is a guideline, but ***guidelines are more helpful than just guessing***, so this estimate of your last frost date is definitely worth knowing.

Besides knowing when to transplant your seedlings outdoors, the average last frost date also tells you when to start seeds indoors.

The information on the back of your seed packets will tell you if you should start those seeds indoors before your last frost date or plant directly in the garden, and usually tells you how many weeks before that date you should start those seeds.

It’s easy to let those dates slide right by if you’re not prepared for them, but this guide will help you start your seeds indoors on time.

## STEP THREE:

**So now, let’s figure out those seed-starting dates for YOUR garden!**

The Personalized Seed Planting Dates worksheet also has spaces for 10 weeks before the last frost, 8 weeks before the last frost, and so on. Let’s look up those dates.

You can use a calendar and count backwards, or you can use an online date calculator such as [this one](#) to figure out those dates:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html>

Add your last frost date to the “Start Date” box, then change the Add/Subtract option to Subtract. Next, you simply enter “4” or “6” in the Weeks box and click on the green “Calculate New Date” button.

Add these dates to your Personalized Garden Planting Dates worksheet.

### **Now you can plant on time!**

Now you know when to transplant your seedlings - or the transplants you bought at the local nursery - into your garden. Knowing your average last frost date makes it easy.

Using the information on the back of your seed packets, you can write down when to plant each type of seed.

For example:

- Tomato seeds should be started indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the last average frost date in your area, and now you know those dates.
- You should transplant those tomato seedlings (or the transplants you bought at the local nursery) about 2 weeks after your last frost date, after the danger of frost has passed. You are armed with those dates and can get it done on time!
- Cabbage seeds should be started indoors 8 to 10 weeks before your average last frost date.
- Those cabbage seedlings (or the transplants you bought) should be transplanted into your garden 2 to 4 weeks before the last frost so that they will mature before the weather gets too hot in summer.

I've compiled a table of seed starting times for some common vegetables, which is included in this download, but you can also find this information on the seed packets if you're growing from seed.



## STEP FOUR:

Step Four is my Big Secret, the most important step. Not doing this is the reason those planting dates will skip right past you faster than the speed of light.

Here it is → ***write the dates on your calendar, or in your planner, or add them to your phone's calendar.***

It's a known fact that writing down a goal is the first step in achieving it. 42% of people who write down their goals are more likely to achieve them. And actually getting those seeds started is your goal.

Now, write the dates on your Personalized Seed Planting Dates worksheet, right under the date of your average last frost.

My Personalized Seed Planting Dates  
Spring Garden

My average last frost date is:	
Ten weeks before my last frost date is:	
Eight weeks before my last frost date is:	
Six weeks before my last frost date is:	
Four weeks before my last frost date is:	
Two weeks before my last frost date is:	
My "after all danger of frost" date is:	

**Right now! Go on, do it now.**

How many times have I thought “I should be planting peas about now,” and then gone along with my day and totally forgotten for another week? I can’t even tell you how many times!

Or I’ve thought, I should write these dates down... but I never did...

When I actually wrote those dates in my planner, I actually planted on time! Maybe not on the exact day (if it was raining for example) but they did get done in a timely manner.

For example, four weeks before your last frost date, you might have a note on your calendar to:

- Plant melon seeds indoors
- Plant peas, spinach and radishes in the garden

Two weeks after your last frost date, you have a reminder to transplant your pepper seedlings into the garden.

By scheduling these tasks on your planner or calendar - or in your phone's calendar - you'll get your garden planted on time.

Let's face it, there are so many different seeds to plant, and seedlings to transplant, and dates to remember them all... It's hard to keep it all straight in your head.

Personally, I think that using my phone's calendar app is extra helpful, because it will send me a reminder to actually get that task done. I use **both** my planner and my phone calendar!

I like to see what's coming up (in my planner) **and** be reminded on the actual date (by my phone).

Planting on time is the easiest way to boost your harvest!

**Here's your homework assignment:** show me your Personalized Dates Worksheet. Post a quick photo of your completed worksheet (and maybe your calendar too!) on social media and tag me @oakhillhomestead on either Facebook or Instagram.

*Happy gardening!*

# *My Personalized Seed Planting Dates*

## Spring Garden

My average last frost date is:

Ten weeks before my last frost date is:

Eight weeks before my last frost  
date is:

Six weeks before my last frost  
date is:

Four weeks before my last frost  
date is:

Two weeks before my last frost  
date is:

My “after all danger of frost” date is:

## *When to start vegetable seeds in spring*

Kind of seed	When to start seeds
Beans	Direct sow outdoors <b>after</b> last frost
Beets	3 weeks before your last frost date, direct sow outdoors
Broccoli	6-8 weeks before your last frost date indoors, <b>or</b> direct sow outdoors 2-3 weeks before last frost
Cabbage	8-10 weeks before your last frost date, start indoors. Transplant 4 weeks before last frost date
Carrots	2-3 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow, carrots don't like to be transplanted
Cauliflower	4-6 weeks before your last frost date, indoors. Transplant 2-4 weeks before last frost
Corn	2-3 weeks <b>after</b> your last frost. Direct sow, corn does not transplant well
Cucumber	4-6 weeks before your last frost date, indoors, or 1-2 weeks <b>after</b> last frost outdoors
Eggplant	7 weeks before your last frost date, indoors, or 1-2 weeks <b>after</b> last frost outdoors
Kale	3-5 weeks before your last frost date, indoors
Kohlrabi	6-8 weeks before your last frost date, indoors. Transplant when soil temp is over 45°F
Leeks	Plant outdoors around time of last frost, leeks can withstand light frost
Lettuce	2-4 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors

Kind of seed	When to start seeds
Melons	4 weeks before your last frost date, indoors.
Okra	2-3 weeks <b>after</b> all danger of frost has passed. Direct sow outdoors.
Onion seeds	4-6 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors.
Parsnips	2 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors.
Peas	4-6 weeks before the last frost date. Direct sow outdoors.
Peppers	6-8 weeks before your last frost date, indoors. Transplant <b>after</b> all danger of frost is past.
Radishes	4-6 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors.
Spinach	4-8 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors. You can also start spinach indoors 6 weeks before your last frost.
Squash, summer	3-4 weeks before last frost, indoors
Squash, winter	Direct sow outdoors <b>after</b> all danger of frost
Swiss chard	2-3 weeks before the last frost date. Direct sow outdoors
Tomatoes	6-8 weeks before your last frost date. Start seeds indoors, transplant after danger of frost.
Turnips	2-3 weeks before your last frost date. Direct sow outdoors
Pumpkins and Watermelon	2-3 weeks before the last frost date if planting indoors, then transplant about 2 weeks after your last frost date. <b>OR</b> direct sow outdoors 1-2 weeks after all danger of frost has passed. (Start seeds indoors if you have a short growing season)



# *Personalized Garden Planting Dates*

by Kathi Rodgers

## *Fall Planting*

In the fall, just as in the spring, timing is everything.

Many of your fall garden plants need to be planted in the summer, when the soaring temperatures make you think of anything but autumn. These planting dates often take us by surprise and are easy to overlook.

Plus, many of these are cool-season plants and don't like hot weather. It's easier to start these finicky seeds indoors, out of the hot weather.

## *What to plant in your fall garden*

Short-season and cool-weather crops are the best choices for a fall garden.

Greens such as lettuce, spinach and kale, brassicas such as broccoli and cabbage, fast-growing root vegetables such as carrots and radishes, and other cool-weather plants such as peas are ideal fall garden plants.

Choose varieties that are fast-growing by checking seed packets for their "days to maturity." You can compare several varieties of radishes, for example, and choose one that will mature quickly.

For example, Early Scarlet Globe Radishes take 22 days to mature, on average.

By the way, "early" in the name is a good sign. This variety matures a full week ahead of other varieties of radish.

Some plants are able to withstand a light frost, around 32°F, while other plants can survive colder temperatures.

Some plants aren't recommended for fall gardening because the amount of time it takes them to mature is so long.

Still others - heat-loving plants such as tomatoes, peppers and okra, for instance - don't produce much when the weather cools down.

Pumpkins, winter squash, melons and corn are not good candidates for a fall garden.

❄ 29° to 32°F is considered a "light freeze." Frost tender plants will not survive, but frost hardy and semi-hardy plants will likely survive.

❄ 25° to 28°F is a "moderate freeze." These temperatures are widely destructive to most garden plants.

❄ 24°F and below is a "severe freeze," "killing freeze" or "killing frost." A severe freeze will cause heavy damage to almost all garden plants.

Some of your fall seeds can be direct-seeded in your garden, but others will need to be started indoors, out of the blazing sun and the heat of summer. Any plants that don't grow well during summer's heat will probably be better off started indoors.

You can also try planting them in the shade of other, taller plants in your garden.

You'll need to plant vegetables a certain amount of time before your average first fall frost date, so they'll have time to mature and produce before your first frost.

## How to find your ideal fall planting dates

Now that you've decided what to plant, let's figure out when to plant them.

Just like in the spring, we'll use the Dave's Garden website to find our average first frost date:

**Dave's Garden** - <https://davesgarden.com/guides/freeze-frost-dates/>

Go to the website, enter your zip code and find out your average first frost date, then enter this date on your Personalized Planting Dates for Fall worksheet on the line "My average first frost date is \_\_\_\_\_"

We'll use my results as an example.

Each winter, on average, your risk of frost is from **October 28** through April 3. Almost certainly, however, you will receive frost from **November 9** through March 22. You are almost guaranteed that you will not get frost from April 16 through **October 14**. Your frost-free growing season is around 208 days.

I'll want to plant my fall garden early enough that my plants will be mature and ready to harvest before my first frost date (for frost-tender plants), or before my "almost certainly" date of November 9th for frost-hardy plants.

Now use the online date calculator website again to find the ideal planting dates for your area: <https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html> just as we did for your spring dates.

This time, however, the times are in days. Seed suppliers use “days before frost” instead of weeks when it comes to fall planting.

So we’ll use the “Days” box instead of the “Weeks” box that we used for spring planting dates.

Add your first frost date to the “Start Date” box, then change the Add/Subtract option to Subtract. Next, enter the number of days (30, 60 or 90) in the “Days” box, and click on the green “Calculate New Date” button.

Personally, I like to subtract another 7-10 days, as a sort of “insurance policy” in case my plants get off to a slow start. To do this, just subtract another week or ten days from your first frost date before you use the date calculator.

Add these dates to your Personalized Garden Planting Dates worksheet, which is included in this guide.



My Personalized Seed Planting Dates	
Fall Garden	
My average first frost date is:	<input type="text"/>
120 days before my first frost	<input type="text"/>

## When to plant your seeds

Unfortunately it’s hard to find transplants (started plants) in the fall. You might be fortunate to have a local nursery that does so, but most major retailers do not stock transplants after the spring planting season ends.

So you’ll probably be planting seeds, which you can order online any time of the year even if you can’t find them in stores.

I've put together a table of common fall garden plants along with when the seeds should be planted, which is included in this download.

*When to start vegetable seeds for your fall garden*

Semi-hardy vegetable plants can survive repeated light frosts of 30-32°F.  
Hardy vegetable plants can withstand temperatures as low as 20°F.

If you prefer to use weeks rather than days, this is an approximate conversion:  
90 days = 13 weeks  
60 days = 8.5 weeks  
30 days = 4 weeks

Plant seeds 90 days before first frost:

Kind of seed	Hardy/Semi-hardy	Notes
Beets	Hardy	
Cabbage	Hardy	

## The secret to a successful fall garden

Do you want to know the secret to a successful fall garden?

It's easy - just write those dates on your Personalized Planting Dates worksheet like we did in the spring.

AND then write them on your calendar!

You must give your plants enough time to grow and reach maturity before your first frost in order to have any harvest at all, so it's even more important to stick to the recommended dates in the fall than it is in the spring.

Writing the dates on your calendar, in your planner, or putting them in your phone with a reminder is the secret. Don't let your planting dates slip by.

The secret to a successful garden is to plant on time!



## Use these sheets for years to come

Now that you've written down your frost dates on the included worksheet, print it off and add it to your garden notebook.

*You'll never have to figure these dates out again!* They do not change from year to year!

Sure, your average last frost date won't always be on a Monday, but it will always be on the same date.

Just pull out that finished worksheet next spring or fall, and enter the dates into your current calendar or planner, or add to your phone's calendar. It's that simple!

## Remember...

Your "average first frost date" is still just a guideline. Just like in the spring, your "first frost date" is the **average date** of the first frost you'll have in the fall.

It's a guideline, but it's a useful guideline. Even though we all occasionally have an early frost, using your average first frost date as a guide to planting times is the best tool we have as fall gardeners.

## Your garden and frost

Vegetable plants can be divided into three categories: frost tender, semi-hardy, and hardy.

Frost tender plants - including tomatoes, peppers, squash, corn and more - are those that cannot survive even a hint of frost. These are the plants that are transplanted into your spring garden after all danger of frost has passed. They are not the best candidates for a fall garden.

Semi-hardy vegetable plants can survive repeated light frosts of 30-32°F. Beets, cauliflower, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard are just a few of the semi-hardy plants.

In fact, a few of these vegetables develop improved flavor after a light frost or two, such as parsnips. This makes them ideal candidates for a fall garden.

Hardy vegetables can survive temperatures as low as 20°F. Cabbage, broccoli, and carrots are in this group. Carrots are another vegetable that will have a sweeter flavor after a frost.

The tops of carrots, parsnips and turnips may be killed by cold, but the root of the plant will probably survive and continue growing. Mulching these plants generously is recommended.

You can also protect your plants from frost by covering them when cold weather is expected. Whether you cover your garden with old bedsheets (thrift stores are a great source for these) or use other methods, you can often save your plants from a light frost.

You can do this in several ways:

- Covering plants with bedsheets, blankets or frost cloth.
- Low tunnels - a low tunnel is made of hoops over the plants, covered with frost cloth when cold weather is expected. The hoops hold the covering above the plants.
- Cold frames - a cold frame resembles a raised garden bed with glass or plastic on top. The plants grow inside the cold frame, and the glass or plastic lets in sun to warm the plants but protects from cold weather and frost.
- Cloche - traditionally a cloche is a bell-shaped or dome-shaped plastic or glass cover that is set over small outdoor plants. Because the plants need to be small, cloches are usually used in the spring.

## How to predict a frost

It's handy to be able to predict a possible frost so you'll know when to protect your plants from the cold.

According to *The Old Farmers Almanac*, if you live in the northern or eastern USA and the daytime temperature is over 75°F, the nighttime temperature will probably remain above freezing. If you live in the desert southwest, the magic number is 80°F.

A cloudy night-time sky will act as a blanket and keep your garden warmer than a clear, starry night.

A light overnight breeze will keep the air warmer too, although a strong, cold wind will blow the warm air away and there will be a higher chance of frost.

Gardens that are situated on a slope or a hilltop are more likely to survive a cold night, since the coldest air settles in the lowest places.

## Keep track of your own frost dates

Keeping a record of the first and last frost dates in your own garden is very helpful over time. Experience is the best teacher of all.

You might remember in the Spring chapter of this guide that, even though my last frost date is “almost guaranteed” to be April 16th, twice in the past couple of years we’ve had a killing frost on April 17th in my garden.

I know, because I’ve kept track, that I should wait to plant my frost-tender, heat-loving plants such as tomatoes after April 17th.

Keeping track of the first frost date in your garden or backyard is easy in the fall. You’ll know exactly when your first frost happens when you wake up that morning.

Just write the date on your calendar or on the included Frost Dates worksheet.

You’ll find a Frost Dates worksheet in this download, where you can record the first and last frost dates each year. Eventually you’ll have your very own average frost dates specific to your very own garden.

*Let's keep in touch!*

Website: <https://oakhillhomestead.com>  
Facebook: [OakHillHomestead](#)  
Instagram: [@oakhillhomestead](#)  
Facebook group: [OHH Homesteading Community](#)

*Oak Hill*  
HOMESTEAD

# *My Personalized Seed Planting Dates*

## Fall Garden

My average first frost date is:

120 days before my first frost  
date is:

90 days before my first frost date is:

60 days before my first frost date is:

30 days before my first frost date is:



## *When to start vegetable seeds for your fall garden*

Semi-hardy vegetable plants can survive repeated light frosts of 30-32°F.

Hardy vegetable plants can withstand temperatures as low as 20°F.

If you prefer to use weeks rather than days, this is an approximate conversion:

90 days = 13 weeks

60 days = 8.5 weeks

30 days = 4 weeks

Plant seeds 90 days before first frost:

Kind of seed	Hardy/Semi-hardy	Notes
Beets	Hardy	
Cabbage	Hardy	
Carrots	Semi-hardy	The tops may die back after frost, but the roots usually tolerate lower temperatures.
Cauliflower	Semi-hardy	
Parsnips	Semi-hardy	The tops may die back after frost, but the roots usually tolerate lower temperatures.

Plant 60 days before first frost:

Kind of seed	Hardy/Semi-hardy	Notes
Broccoli	Hardy	
Kale	Hardy	
Kohlrabi	Hardy	
Leeks	Hardy	
Peas	Semi-hardy	
Swiss chard	Semi-hardy	
Turnips	Hardy	The tops may die back after frost, but the roots usually tolerate lower temperatures.

Plant 30 days before first frost:

Kind of seed	Hardy/Semi-hardy	Notes
Lettuce, leaf	Semi-hardy	
Mustard	Hardy	
Radishes	Hardy	
Spinach	Hardy	

Other:

Garlic	Hardy	Plant at least 3 weeks before your ground freezes
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# *Do you need more help planning your garden?*

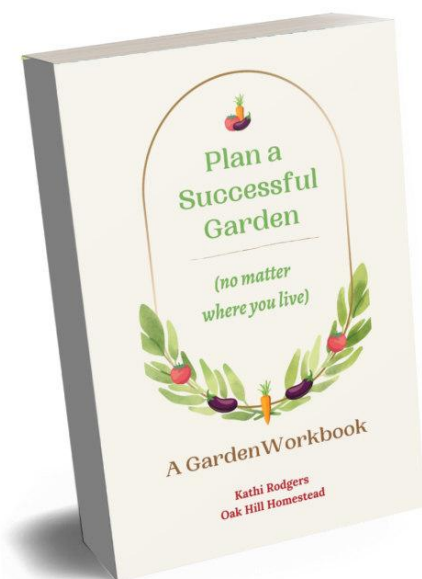
The **Plan a Successful Garden** workbook will help you grow your best garden ever!

Learn how to:

- choose the best location for your garden
- decide the type of garden that will best suit your situation: in the ground, in raised garden beds or in containers
- choose what to grow (that's the fun part!) depending on where you live
- And so much more!

No detail has been overlooked!

The **Plan a Successful Garden** workbook contains 50+ worksheets for you to fill out as you plan your garden with advice, tips and proven recommendations. You'll be off to a great start, knowing where to build your garden & what to plant!



You CAN grow a successful garden, it just takes a little planning!

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